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The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
Onward and Upward forever

ETERNAL LIFE AS A DUTY
(AN EASTER EDITORIAL)

Eternal life is offered by religious teachers as a reward; or as an inevitable gift; or as a result following certain conditions; and by some as an attainment. Not often enough is it set forth as a duty. The attitude of men toward the eternal life is largely a matter of their idea of when it is begun. If the present life must terminate before the eternal life begins, the problem is very different from what it is if the eternal has already begun in this present life. If time and eternity are separated by a mysterious chasm, our thought of eternal life must adapt itself to that fact; but if time and eternity are one, and eternal life is a quality of the life that we now live, we have a very different problem at the core of our life.

We can imagine a group of men looking across broken country toward a range of hills. In the far distance is discernible a notch in a hill top. That notch is where the way goes over the range of hills into the country that lies beyond. These men discuss much the problem of reaching that significant point in the hills, the single visible point of the far way. Wherever it leads, their duty is to follow the highway in which their feet are already placed.

Life is such a highway. We discern afar the point where it passes into the "undiscovered country." But immortality does not begin at that far point; it has already begun, and the road of our common life is part of that eternal highway. Duty leads our feet into the eternal ways. There are immortal qualities in human conduct; there are deathless elements in our present life. The noblest standard of conduct, that which calls for the splendid qualities of chivalry, courage, integrity, and the whole range of the highest things, gets its greatest significance from this deathless quality.

Many a man has asked that rationalism shall give him the proof of "life beyond the grave." Failing to find this proof, he has set about the task of placing this present life on a high plane. He has laid hold of present certainties. The worth of honesty, the value of veracity, the unanswerable arguments of the significance of this present life, in a moral universe, have had a compelling power over his purpose. He has resolutely filled his life with the finest and best that this world affords.

After a time he is taken by surprise; he discovers that incidentally the faith in immortality has taken possession of his soul. He did not see its approach, and did not detect its footsteps as it crossed the threshold of his mind. When it came, or whence, he does not know till he interrogates it. But in the household of his thoughts it has taken up its abode. The clear light of a quiet conviction came when it was not expected. But that conviction becomes a radiant faith, an eternal light.

H. H. S.

ON THE THIRD DAY

By REV. VIVIAN POMEROY, D. D.
Minister, The First Congregational Parish in Milton, Mass.

Did Jesus Christ rise from the d in the manner suggested by Gospel stories with their physi- details, and affirmed in the an- t Creed of the Christian Church ich proceeds to the flat state- nt: "I believe in the Resurrection the body"? If anyone asks me t question, I am bound to an- r: I don't know. I share to the the perplexity which so many ple feel today about the physical details of the Resurrection narratives, and I am overcome by doubts whenever I am invited to affirm anything which means that bodies actually dead come to life again. I simply don't know what to make of such elements in the Gospels and the Creeds; I don't know with any certainty whether or not there was an empty tomb three days after the Crucifixion; and, what is more, I can't believe that there is a living

man today who does know with any certainty.

I fall back, or proceed, to what we do know; and we know this: that on the Second Day those men who had been the companions of Jesus, living with his work and affection and trust, suffered "a little death" of their own. Their courage and hope and joy had died, and yet they knew they had to go on living somehow. And don't we all at some time or other experience that dreadful Second Day, when death has smashed a visible relationship upon which we have relied and in which we have known brightness and warmth; when the dark wave of death has broken upon our shore and has seemed to leave it strewn with sorrowful litter; and there we are, facing the necessity of not only accepting the brutal fact of death but also carrying on with life from which all the color has gone?

But on the Third Day those first disciples of Jesus became, instead of stuttling cowards, men of valor; and they were not going to live with dead hopes and a pathetic memory of a great love which would always recede and become dimmer and dimmer with the years, but they were going on living in a certain way—and that way had everything to do with their hearts' allegiance to that Man, that strange and glorious Man, whom they knew to have been hanged up as a scarecrow and his broken body hidden away in a limestone hole. And we are also sure—or can be sure, if we care enough about the things that are deep and abiding in human experience—that their re-created courage and love and devotion reached out to a still living personality; for that experience has been repeated not once but innumerable times in the souls of men.

And this is what really matters, the only thing that matters:—this unshakeable conviction which on the Third Day those disciples of Jesus gained that the spirit which had been revealed in him—the spirit of wisdom and loving friendship and the Kingdom of God, call it what you will—and the essential values of his personality and the very identity of it—had not been wiped out, but were in some way superior to the brutality of the world and the harsh aspects of the physical universe; and they were able to affirm exultantly, and to act upon the affirmation, that, although their Dearest had seemed to die, yet he surely lived, and would always live as long as a human soul remained open to love. I say, they gained the certainty that the spirit that was in Jesus was not rejected and thrown away by the Universe, was not thrown as rubbish into the void, but was as real an influence and as true a love as when he called fishermen from their nets, or Mary from her frivolity, or patiently taught people by his matchless parables about the existence of an invisible Realm of God.

A captain in the Second World War vouches for the story of a fine, gay, high-hearted lad in one of the regiments whom everybody not only respected but loved. A shell burst and blew him to pieces. One of his friends, knocked down by the same explosion, picked himself up and looked at the dreadful havoc that was left, and then, after a moment's silence, gasped: "Well, he will go on. It will take more than that to stop him." And he stumbled forward with a renewed and flaring courage.

We are always seeing in less horrible or dramatic circumstances the havoc which death makes in this world where personality is the most precious element. For there is no use in blinking the fact that death is a grim contradiction to the sweetest, loveliest words the human heart has learned to utter. And if on any day all the men and women in a community were warned that sudden death lay ten minutes ahead of

em, if they were given ten min-
es in which to tell what life most
eply meant to them, every tele-
one line to homes and other places
uld be busy with people trying to
l other people, stammering out,
w much they loved them.

I believe that Easter, above all,
eans that it takes more than death
stop love; that, contrary to all
pearances, personality is the vic-
rious element in this Universe.

So, all these centuries the Church,
th its incredible and superstitious
istences, has been saying this
out Jesus Christ, and, because of
m, also about the least of His
ethren. Antagonistic circumstance
d man's cruelty laid heavy hands
on Him. They killed Him on a
ss; they shoved His body into a
ave; they rolled a great stone in
nt of Him. But it would have
ken more than that to stop Him;
is always taking more than that
stop Him. It looks utterly black
the Second Day. On that day
u can call Him dead with the
nviction of despair; but on the
ird Day He rises—He eternally
es—from the dead.

★★★★★★★

'Life is worth the living. It is
od and it is beautiful, in spite of
e tragedy with which it is forever
set. We glory in it in the faith
t its goodness is of the essence
things. This is a profound faith—
re profound than we perhaps sus-
t because it stands upon faith
d faith alone. There is no proof for
no objective test to support it
cept the living of life itself, but
is is the perhaps the best test of
."

—Rev. Duncan Howlett

THE RETURN TO RELIGION

By Rev. William Safford Jones, D. D.
Minister Emeritus, The South Parish,
Portsmouth, N. H.

Science, Art, Sociology,—none of these can satisfy the deepest cravings of the human soul. None of these can satisfy the craving for the continuance of personal life beyond the crisis we call death. For aught some sceptics know, this life, so fleeting and so fragmentary and so inconclusive, may be our first and last chance in the venture of being. None of these can satisfy the longing for an eternal background to human life and experience and thought. Not one of these realms can furnish the power which makes ordinary men and women invincible in a great cause or faithful in a humble duty because they are filled with a sense of working under the light and hope and security of eternity. To go down into the depths of the Soul, something more is needed.

"Religion," says H. G. Wells, "is the first thing and the last thing, and until a man has found God and been found by God, he begins at no beginning, he works to no end. He may have his friendships, his partial loyalties, his scraps of honour. But all these things fall into place and life falls into place only with God. Only with God. God, who fights through men against Blind Force and Night and Non-Existence; who is the end, who is the meaning. He is the only King."

That is what I mean by the return to religion, the acknowledgment by intelligent and earnest men and women everywhere that the inner life is a dreary vacuity without it. Religion alone, they more and more clearly see, saves man from yielding to his basest impulses, lifts him above grief and loss, exalts him to a sense of kinship with the Eternal..

If life is to be built up from within, religion is the most powerful force that can be employed. From all sides that testimony is coming in, from scientists and artists and sociologists as well as from theologians and philosophers and faithful souls untouched by doubt. The poverty of the irreligious, the unreligious, soul is so strikingly apparent that men and women outside the Church are asking themselves whether they are getting the most out of human life, putting the most into human life, without its presence and sanction.

But the return to religion, the deep undercurrent of our age, which many fail to perceive because they are looking at the surface retreat from religion, does not by any means imply the return to old forms of religion except as those old forms are of permanent value in the spiritual culture of the race. "The old that ages," declares a wise thinker, "he must let go, who would hold fast the old that ages not." Doubtless the revival of religion, the renaissance of faith, on the verge of which we now stand, will bring with it many new forms of expression, fresh moulds of human thought and emotion, into which the Spirit of Truth will pour itself with renewed power. But the old forms which have stood the test of the ages and still speak to the hearts of men with persuasive appeal will not be "cast as rubbish to the void." Through them the word of life will still course, unspent and free. It is only the letter which killeth that will be discarded in the return to religion.

For it is religion now as of old that builds up the strongest and richest human character.

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

The 2nd Installment of An Article By

REV. HARRY C. MESERVE

Minister, First Unitarian Society, San Francisco, Calif.

(The first installment of Mr. Meserve's article, published in the February issue, cited the age-old question, "Is a Christian distinguished by a way of life or by assent to a verbal doctrine?")

This new definition, which could restore strength and unity to the badly shattered and terribly ineffective "body of Christ," will begin, not with the creeds of the fourth and fifth centuries, nor with the rituals and sacraments of the Churches, nor with the literal acceptance of the Bible, but with human personality and with life itself. It might take its start from the acid comment of a devout Hindu on Christianity: "Jesus is ideal and wonderful, but you Christians are not like him." A Christian, after all, is a person who, in his own life and in the circumstances which surround him, is trying to express something of the faith, the bravery, the patience, and the love that Jesus showed in his life on earth. For such a person, Jesus is not the supernatural king and judge, but the example, the guide, the teacher, the friend in whose words and through whose life the divine love and compassion broke through into the common life of men.

Such a definition of Christianity would dispose of two of Christianity's most serious and besetting sins: pride and exclusiveness. One of the most unloving, unlovable, and indeed unChristlike aspects of Christianity has always been the peculiar arrogance with which certain Christians

ave asserted their own salvation
id the damnation of everybody else
ho believed differently from them.
his arrogance is quite logical if
hristianity is the acceptance of a
octrine; but if Christianity is, as
e are suggesting, the practice of a
ay of life which bears some resem-
lance to the beauty and love of
esus' life, then any honest person
ill be modest and humble in his
laim to represent Christianity. He
ay say that he is trying—and he
opes progressing—in this high and
ard quest; but he will incline more
o share his experiences with other
en of good will, to grow with them
nd learn from them, rather than
o censor them. He will be slow to
et himself up as an example of
erfection. He will behave like one
ho is seeking—rather than one
ho has already found—all the an-
wers, and he will have the humility
nd teachableness appropriate to his
ondition.

The second of these besetting sins
om which this new definition could
et Christianity free is exclusiveness.
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entality bothers wise and profound
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nly one way to the good life, and
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Jesus is admittedly a genuine
nd a beautiful way to the good life,
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ligion and its way not the only
ay. It is usually the immature per-
n, the frightened and insecure per-
n who demands conformity and
nnot abide disagreement. It is not
possible that the exclusiveness of
hristianity may be a sign of its im-
aturity as a world religion. In any
individual life, it is a great step forward when a man begins to see that the fact of variety in the world around him does not mean that everybody else is bad, but simply different from himself. When he gives up his hostile and defensive attitude, and tries to learn from and to help the people who are different from himself, he is beginning to grow up. He is apt to find that he has much more in common with many who differ from him than he had ever thought possible. In the same way, Christianity—as one of the great world religions—would not diminish, but rather increase its spiritual stature if it could learn to approach the non-Christian majority of the world's people, not with the demand for conversion, but with a frank desire for mutual understanding and the discovery of a common ground upon which all men of good will can stand as friends and equals. You are not less a Christian if you are willing to admit that other religions, too, have profound and true insights any more than you are less an American if you think that the Alps or the English countryside are superlatively beautiful.

This new definition of Christianity will be humble and open-minded towards all manifestations of authentic religion anywhere on earth. It will base its claims to religiousness on the kind of people it produces, not on what those people say they believe or what organizations they belong to. That is to say, its definition will be ethical, rather than theological. It will not scorn those who believe in the literal truth of the Bible or the Virgin Birth or the efficacy of the sacraments; nor will it scorn the people who do not find such things essential to their faith. To all sorts and conditions of churches and religious groups, it will apply the same test: Are these people growing in charity, in wisdom, in

kindness, in the will to make justice, peace, and brotherhood prevail on earth? Do they care for the people that Jesus cared for: the humble, the weak, the sick, the confused, the poor, the weary and heavy-laden? Do they care for the truth above personal or institutional advantage? Do they care for human beings and their welfare and happiness? In short, do they have compassion? If they do, they are Christian. If they do not care for these things, then no matter what their protestations, they are no Christians.

Obviously such a definition would split all the churches as they are at present organized. But it would not split them as they are now split: along lines of creed and ritual among Baptists and Methodists, Catholics and all the rest of the 260 different sects which complicate American religious life today. The split would cut across the whole body of the Churches as they now exist, separating those who truly seek to live as people who value that for which Jesus lived and died from those who do not see religion as a way of life at all, but only as a hard core of doctrine, or a set of forms and rituals, or a polite cloak of respectability. This kind of split would not be a disaster. In many ways it would be healthy, for Christianity would come to mean something which it has not meant for a long time (except in a few isolated and honorable cases): a fellowship of men and women, admittedly imperfect, but sincerely dedicated to the following of the Christian values of love and brotherhood, freedom, and peace in their own lives and in the world. Such a fellowship could shake the world and restore to Christianity some of its ancient heroism and love.

A further result of such a re-definition of Christianity on grounds of life instead of doctrine might be the discovery of a far greater doctrinal unity than we think possible today. It was Jesus himself who said that if a man will honestly try to do the will of God, he will come to know the doctrine. The things we most deeply believe come to us, not from books or sermons, nor from creeds and rituals, but out of that which we find—in the fires of life and suffering and struggling and growth—to be most true and trust worthy. A man comes to believe that God is good and loving and dependable, not because he has read it in a book, but because perhaps he suddenly realizes how much he has which he has never really earned, or how often he has been treated with mercy and love beyond his deserving, or how, occasionally he has found strength to do what needed to be done when his own mind and powers were worn out and discouraged. A man comes to believe that Jesus stands for something beautiful and divine in the long tale of human struggle and growth, not because a creed teaches him this, or a great church council asserts it, but because perhaps he has found himself returning to Jesus again and again as an example of courage, integrity, and love; or because he is struck by the fact that if we could only begin to follow Jesus simply and sincerely, we could transform our own lives and the world's. A man does not know much about brotherhood—though he may affirm it as his belief—until he has actually (and probably with some misgivings) found himself in a real situation where he had to act in terms of brotherhood or deny it utterly. But once he has met that test and acted in terms of brotherhood, he knows this faith is real. Life and our experience: joy and sorrow, success and failure, love and pain teach us whatever real faith we have; and the wonder of it is that those who have learned their faith thus are not interested in splitting doctrinal hairs with one another about the

rgin Birth or the deity of Jesus; they know and understand one other inwardly, can respect their ferences, and are much more im- ssed by the unities which they d. I do not think Jesus would ve trouble understanding St. Fran- of Assisi, though 1200 years of ie separated them, and one was ious Jew, while the other was a od Catholic. The medieval St. ancis would have understood the th Century Quaker, George Fox. e great Christians of our own day ve loved and praised the great ndu, Gandhi, and understood him, . The great souls are always too for the doctrines and the urches, the sects, and the rituals ich keep us lesser souls apart.

Christianity is a way of living. If it is not this, it is not worth bothering about. It is humble and inclusive. It can exclude no sincere seeker after the good life. Its only authoritative test is what kind of person you are and what kind of person you are trying to become. Its creeds and rituals, its dogmas and practices have value if they are helping you to become a person in whom that love and fidelity which made Jesus great and beautiful is living again to some degree. The best definition I know of that Christianity we seek—a Christianity of the life, and not of the letter alone—is in the benediction created and used by Dean Fenn:

> The spirit that was in Jesus be in us also: enabling us to know the truth and do the will of God, and to enter into his peace. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR EASTER

Almighty Father, the source of life and of light: we lift up our earts to thee in gratitude and in petition. We offer thee our gratitude r thy gifts; and we bring unto thee our petition for wisdom and urage to use rightly the precious realities which thou hast bestowed pon us. Thou hast given us thy gift of life, for which we did not ask. ut thou has put before us a choice of ways which, in our life, we may ilow.

In the most venturesome hours of our faith we have dared to believe at, here and now, we deal with eternal value; and we pray that we ay have the wisdom to choose those values and courage to live for em. When we rise above our clouds of doubt we see that goodness is ernal, that integrity is everlasting, that truth is imperishable.

Help us then, O Father, to fill our daily life with the realities hich are everlasting. So shall we live, in the midst of time, that life eternal. Keep us ever loyal to thee that we may fulfill, on earth, y divine purpose; that we may live as those who know themselves to the children of God.

On this glad Easter Day may we rise above the fear that death is ie end of our life. As the light of the dawn has advanced into the full ght of day, so may our vision of life everlasting advance to the fullness a radiant faith. And, in the time that is to come, may we hold that ith with unfaltering courage. So shall we live as disciples of our Master ho has revealed to the eyes of men the power of an endless life. Amen.

Preston Bradley Mission Coming To Hub In April

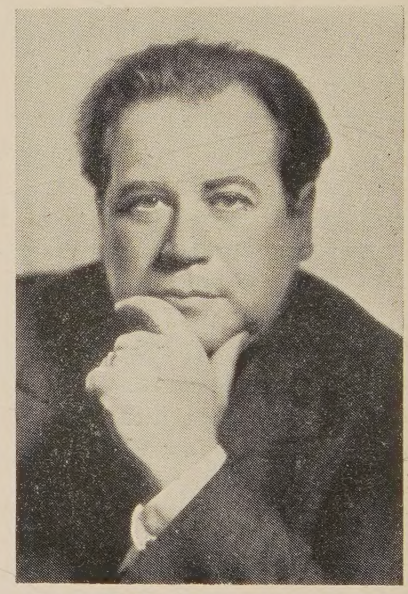
A new era in the life of Unitarianism in Boston and vicinity will be marked in April by the long awaited appearance of Rev. Preston Bradley, LL.D., D. D., minister of the People's Church of Chicago, at the initiation of the Unitarian Christian Fellowship working through greater Boston churches.

Dr. Bradley's visit will be in the nature of a preaching mission, a prophetic talent for which he is nationally known. He will appear at the Arlington Street Church on April 23, 24 and 25th respectively at eight o'clock in the evening, filling in during the daytime with a heavy schedule of speaking engagements.

Dr. Bradley is a "Chicago Institution," the morning service of his church having been broadcast every Sunday for twenty-six years, the second oldest continuous broadcast of its kind in America. His church membership roll lists over 4500 members while his influence over the air and through extensive civic activities, extends to many thousands more.

His daily Radio Program over radio station WGH, Chicago, has the highest rating of any Commentator's program on any Chicago radio station. His civic activities include a Directorship of the Public Library, the Presidency of the Isaak Walton League of America and membership on the Mayor's Council on Race Relations to the Illinois Prison Investigation Commission.

Dr. Bradley has traveled extensively in Europe, spending the summer of 1949 studying the conditions of European countries, preaching in England, Ireland, Scotland and Holland where he attended the Thir-



DR. PRESTON BRADLEY

teenth Congress of the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom.

Committees are now busily at work undertaking the many details which make such a mission a vital contribution to the religious life of an entire area as well as to the Unitarian denomination.

Dr. Frederick May Eliot, President of The American Unitarian Association, has this to say about the scheduled April Mission, "I am looking forward with keen pleasure to the series of meetings in April with Dr. Preston Bradley as the preacher. It seems to me that this series may well mark an epoch in Boston Unitarianism and I am delighted that the plan is under way."

Ministers are urged to bring these events to the attention of their congregations.

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Articles for publication in this periodical are welcome for consideration from all who wish to use these columns to express Unitarian Christianity.

APPLICATION

Unitarian Christian Fellowship

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Purpose: To preserve and strengthen the Christian essence of Unitarianism.

I hereby subscribe to the purpose of the Unitarian Christian Fellowship as outlined above. Herewith is $.....in payment of membership for the current year, May 1st, 1951, through May 1st, 1952; this to include a yearly one dollar subscription, to the publication of the Fellowship.*

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*Regular membership $2.00.
Contributing membership $5.00 or more.

Special pre-program issue for the October General Conference in Montreal!

THE DISCIPLINES OF LIBERTY

The three psychiatrists in this issue, recognizing the dynamic role of the emotions in the formation of an adult, responsible personality, examine the psychological bases for a mature use of one's freedom. Stuart Chase and Malcolm Knowles focus on ways of achieving agreement in group situations where common goals are desired but means cannot be reconciled. Francis Knight Ballaine defines the real meaning of freedom in a democratic society and Leslie T. Pennington cites a magnificent use of it in the engagement of a whole community's resources to fight racism in Chicago.

Whether or not you plan to attend the Conference which will be based on the articles in this issue, you will find plenty of material for discussion groups and programs. Order your extra copies now before the supply is exhausted!